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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SKOPJE 000486

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [PARM](#) [EINT](#) [MK](#) [KV](#)  
SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: PM GRUEVSKI REAFFIRMS STANCE ON KOSOVO  
RECOGNITION AND TRANSLATLANTIC COMMITMENTS, CHIDES  
OPPOSITION FOR PARLIAMENTARY BOYCOTT

REF: SKOPJE 473

Classified By: Amb. Milovanovic for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Macedonia remains committed to its NATO and EU orientation, PM Gruevski told the Ambassador July 25. He rejected claims that the GOM is stepping away from its democratic obligations, citing opposition intransigence and unpopularity. The PM insisted the recent budget rebalancing will not affect Macedonia's commitments to Alliance operations, citing his decision to send additional medical personnel to Afghanistan. Gruevski was also pleased to give us the news that parliament had just passed a long-awaited language law. On Kosovo, he seemed unwilling to budge on recognition prior to completion of border demarcation, but also showed an apparently genuine commitment to move this process along quickly. Ambassador also officially notified Gruevski of General Dynamics' interest in providing a C3I system to the Macedonian military. Reporting on the name issue and the language law to follow septel. End summary.

Surprise! A New Language Law, But Still No Opposition Role  
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12. (C) A clearly pleased PM Gruevski informed the Ambassador that only one-half hour prior to their meeting, the Macedonian parliament had approved -- with the assent of his coalition partner DUI -- the long-negotiated law on the official use of the Albanian language. He chided the opposition SDSM for its boycott of parliament, asserting that the party's reasons for staying away from parliament (the high-profile and publicly humiliating arrest of SDSM Vice Chair Zoran Zaev and the subsequent passage -- absent SDSM -- of sweeping new procedures to streamline parliamentary debate and significantly reduce MPs' authorized speaking time) were unpopular with the public. He unconvincingly insisted Zaev's arrest was not in any way political, adding that the Macedonian people support the fight against corruption.

13. (C) Ambassador responded that we are not arguing the merits of the actual case against Zaev, but the manner of his arrest (a highly publicized perp walk which seemed aimed at persuading the public of his guilt in advance) and the subsequent rush passage over 40 laws -- including key legislation such as the language law -- do give us pause. Gruevski said he understood, adding that the Speaker had made a special effort to invite the opposition to the formal confirmation of the government on July 26, even delaying the event by several hours to give them more time to decide to

come (as expected, they did not).

We Are NATO-Ready

14. (C) Ambassador pressed Gruevski on Macedonia's NATO bid, noting that subsequent to all 26 Allies agreeing in Bucharest that Macedonia qualified for membership several developments have given some pause: election violence and re-dos, the Zaev arrest, passage of legislation absent the opposition, and also the recent budget re-balance, which drew away \$14 million from the Ministry of Defense. This last item seems to call into question Macedonia's ability to train and equip its soldiers, and to maintain its commitments in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Gruevski claimed that the lion's share of the money were funds MOD had not spent for a communications system and helicopters, but maintained that he was not turning away from his NATO or EU commitments. Indeed, he reported that GOM had just decided to send a supplemental 4-6 person medical contingent to Afghanistan. Ambassador noted that MOD funds remained unspent because the PM himself had refused to authorize the expenditures.

Kosovo: Gruevski Demurs on De-Linking, But Wants Fast Agreement on Demarcation

15. (C) Ambassador told Gruevski that patience was wearing thin on Kosovo recognition. Demarcation talks seem to be proceeding well, so there seems to be less reason every day to insist on their completion before recognition. She urged

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him to consider coordinating recognition with Malta and Montenegro. Gruevski declined to de-link demarcation from recognition, instead insisting that the carrot of recognition is what has kept demarcation talks going so smoothly.

16. (C) More promisingly, Gruevski told the Ambassador that he has instructed the Macedonian negotiating team to proceed expeditiously with the talks, adding that to this end he had authorized to immediately pay for demarcation stones that were the financial responsibility of the Kosovo side. Gruevski added that he had spoken with FonMin Milososki after his July 2 meeting with the Ambassador (reftel), in which we had asked the GOM to look into practical solutions for farmers whose lands would be divided by demarcation so they can work their fields without undue burden. Gruevski reported that he had instructed the Minister of Interior to draw up a draft MoI-MoI agreement as soon as next week to present to the Kosovars. He added that Macedonia has similar protocols with Bulgaria and Serbia, so he hoped such an agreement would be easy to reach and implement.

Advocacy for General Dynamics

17. (SBU) Ambassador presented Gruevski with a formal advocacy letter to announce General Dynamics' interest in providing a C3I system to the Macedonian military. She stressed that the system is state-of-the-art and guarantees NATO interoperability, and also noted that her conversations with General Dynamics persuaded her that this is a company interested in a meaningful and long-term business commitment in Macedonia.  
Milovanovic